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STATE FOR SCA/FO SCA/RA, SCA/A, S/CT, EB/ESC AND INL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2016  
TAGS: [EFIN](#) [ETTC](#) [AF](#) [KTFN](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: DESIGNATING HIG: POST VIEWS

REF: STATE 188854 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald Neumann for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

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SUMMARY  
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**¶1.** (S/NF) Reftel asks for Post's internal assessment of the impact of designating Hizb-I Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) as a foreign terrorist organization. Post has no objections to designating HIG in the UN 1267 Committee and the OFAC under E.O. 13224, provided that the designation distinguishes between the legal entity Hizb-i-Islami and HIG and their respective members. The Hizb-i-Islami is a legally registered party in Afghanistan, with about 25 MPs that accepts the Constitution of Afghanistan as well as the GOA as Afghanistan's legally constituted government. In addition, any designation of HIG should be designed to allow HIG members to reconcile under the Afghan PTS national reconciliation program without risk of designation post-reconciliation.

**¶2.** (S/NF) Distinguishing HIG from Hizb-i-Islami: Post understands that in the past, the U.S. has designated both a group and the members of the group individually, illustrating that effective action against the individual does not flow directly from the designation of the group. We believe that the designation of HIG as a group should follow this precedent so that individuals who are suspected members of HIG can be vetted for designation on a case by case basis in order to determine if they are active HIG members.

**¶3.** (S/NF) Impact and Effect on Designation and Recocilation: Afghans in general think the HIG is worse than the Taliban. HIG members are often viewed as war criminals, anti-West, too extreme, and willing to start blood feuds to advance their interests. One possible downside to designation is that it could legitimize the group by putting it on the UN list, especially among extremists in Iran, Pakistan, and Africa. Other possible ramifications include revenge attacks in villages against government or village officials seen as close to the GOA or the West. No one at Post believes designation will negatively affect efforts to reconcile HIG members through PTS. We have seen that designation of the Taliban has in no way inhibited reconciliation of its adherents.

**¶4.** (S/NF) Embassy requests the opportunity to vet the draft designation language to ensure that designation does not extend to the legal Hizb-i-Islami political party and that those HIG members who wish to reconcile are not penalized or prevented from joining the PTS program.

**¶5.** (S/NS) This cable was cleared by Post's Terrorist Finance Coordinating Committee.

